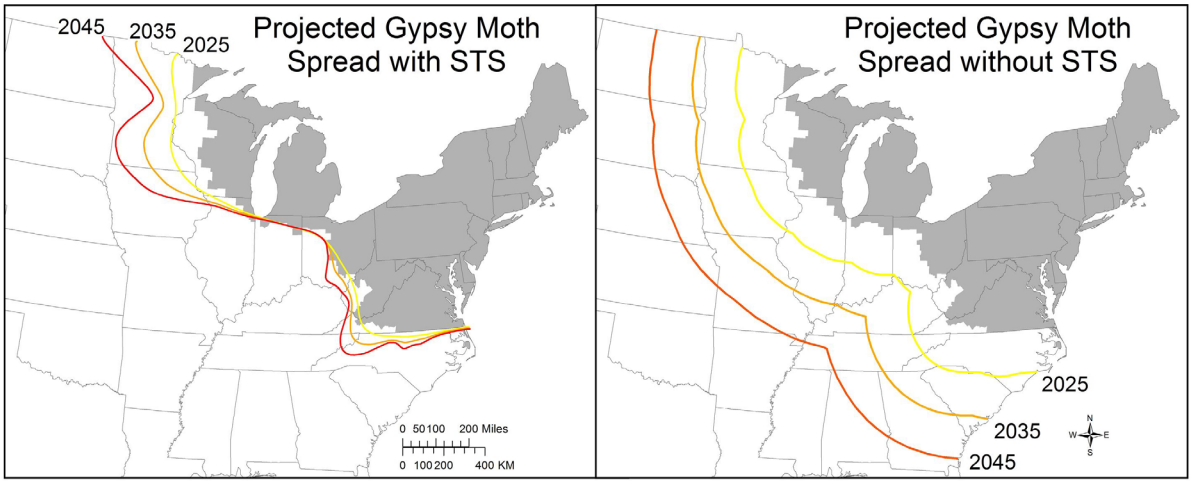
National Gypsy Moth Management Program

Reducing damage, eliminating isolated infestations, and slowing the spread

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry

Description: The gypsy moth is a nonnative invasive insect that was introduced into Massachusetts in the late 1860s. It is now established in all or parts of 19 Eastern States and the District of Columbia, or roughly one-third of its potential habitat in the United States. Once gypsy moth infests an area, outbreaks appear from time to time. The gypsy moth caterpillar eats tree leaves, which reduces tree growth and increases dieback, eventually killing the tree. Gypsy moth has defoliated trees on more than 92 million acres since 1924.



At the current rate of success, the gypsy moth Slow the Spread (STS) program will prevent gypsy moth from spreading to an additional 150 million acres over the next 30 years.

A national environmental impact statement (EIS) guides the response to gypsy moth infestations and outbreaks across a 50-million-acre Slow the Spread (STS) project area, which spans a region 1,200 miles long and 65 miles wide across 11 States from Minnesota to North Carolina. The project targets small, scattered gypsy moth colonies along the advancing front of the generally infested area.

The EIS outlines three strategies: 1) reduce damage from outbreaks in the generally infested area (***suppression)***; 2) eliminate isolated infestations outside the generally infested area (***eradication)***; and 3) reduce the moth's spread into un-infested areas (***slow the spread)***. The U.S. Forest Service coordinates with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and others to implement the USDA National Gypsy Moth Management program.

Key Issues:

- The largest increase in gypsy moth defoliation since 2006 and 2007 occurred across states in the Northeast, including in New England in 2015. About 150,000 acres are planned for treatment in 2016 across six states (MD, NJ, OH, PA, WI WV) to reduce damage to trees form gypsy moth outbreaks.

- STS has reduced gypsy moth's rate of spread by more than 60 percent, from an average of 13 miles per year to less than five miles per year. This reduction has prevented environmental damage and financial losses on more than 125 million acres since 2000.

- Early detection and rapid response to isolated outbreaks outside the generally infested area eliminate the need for larger, more costly, and frequent treatments later. By delaying impacts and suppression costs in newly infested areas, STS has a benefit-to-cost ratio of more than 3:1.
- Reduced funding in FY 2012 and FY 2013 correlated with an increase in gypsy moth spread, a trend that is expected to continue as budgets are reduced. However, in the short term, we are still achieving the STS project objective to reduce the spread of the insect by 60 percent over historical levels.

Accomplishments:

- Treated more than 34,000 acres of public and private lands in six states (MD, NJ, OH, PA, WI and WV) to reduce damage from gypsy moth outbreaks, and about 900 acres acres to eliminate isolated infestations in Ohio.
- Treated 181 distinct colonies totaling 516,818 acres in the STS action area across 6 states to reduce the spread of the insect. Most lands were treated using a gypsy moth specific product that disrupts gypsy moth mating.
- Deployed about 60,000 pheromone traps across 10 states to monitor populations along the leading edge of the STS action area.
- Completed aerial and ground surveys of defoliation caused across all affected states. More than 1.3 million acres sustained damage by gypsy moth in 2015; the most since 2007.
- The 2015 summer meeting of gypsy moth program managers was hosted by the Illinois Department of Agriculture at Starved Rock State Park. Technical and program operational issues were identified and addressed, especially the beginnings of new gypsy moth across the Northeast.

Budget History:

The suppression and eradication funds shown are those allocated to State and federal partners in the Northeastern Area. Gypsy moth STS program funds represent the total funding for the program. The Forest Service Washington office allocates STS funds to the Northeastern Area and Southern Region based on the annual STS plan of work approved by the STS Foundation Board of Directors. The Northeastern Area and the Southern Region may at times allocate additional resources to STS in a given year. Taken in total, STS, suppression and eradication make up the USDA National Gypsy Moth Management Program.

National Gypsy Moth Management Program
(Dollars, thousands)

Projects	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Suppression	$1,004	$204	$1,010	
Eradication	$24	$60	$16	
Slow the Spread	$7,875	$8,875	$8,125	

Future Direction:

- Continue to monitor and support suppression, eradication, and STS treatment needs.
- Promote the STS business model as a template for responding to other invasive forest pests such as emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid and others.

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